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The Guinea
OR
Gold Coast of Africa,


FORMERLY A COLONY OF THE AXUMITES,
OR
ANCIENT ABYSSINIANS IN THE REIGN OF
KING SOLOMON,
AND THE
VERITABLE OPHIR OF SCRIPTURE,
NOW AN UNDISPUTED COLONY OF
GREAT BRITAIN.

BY
CAPTAIN GEORGE PEACOCK, F.R.G.S.

*With a fac-simile Map of the Gold Coast Territory, by D'Anville,
printed in the year 1729.*

ALSO
*Plans of the ports of Cape Coast Castle, Axim or Axum, Dix's
Cove, Elmina, and the entrance of the river Volta, from
Admiralty Surveys.*

1880.
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PREFACE.

The following interesting, elaborate, and curious paper was written by Captain George Peacock, F.R.G.S., in 1873, shortly after the breaking out of the Ashantee war, shewing that the Gold Coast of Africa or Guinea was originally a Colony of Abyssinia during the reign of Maquida or Azeb, the Great Queen of Sheba, and that this rich country was undoubtedly the veritable Ophir of Solomon. This "Paper" was published in *John o'Groats Journal* of the 20th November, 1873, and was highly commended by the learned societies of Europe and the United States. It is now reprinted in a pamphlet form, with copious notes, which did not appear in the Periodical referred to.

The Author forwarded a copy of this "Paper" to Sir Garnet Wolseley and received a handsome letter of thanks and commendation, dated from the camp of the British Army, by order of Sir Garnet (see P.S.).

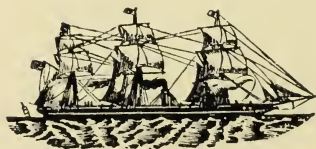
On the return of the army to England a banquet was given by the Mayor of Liverpool to Sir John Glover, when in the course of his (Sir John's) speech,

P 47166

he referred to the products, and great abundance of gold on this part of the African Coast.

No less than four companies have recently been formed for extracting the gold at this long neglected "Eldorado," on the most improved system that experience in modern gold mining has perfected. These companies have a large capital subscribed, and will employ the most skilful and energetic managers, with the best description of machinery. The Guinea or Gold Coast being now an entirely undisputed British colony, with plenty of cheap labour, and having frequent and easy steam communication with England, it is confidently expected that before many years the yield of the precious metal will be equal to or even exceed the annual exports of either California or Australia in their palmiest days, and prove a most remunerative undertaking to the pioneer companies which are now working in the Wassau district.

London, 1st May, 1880.



The Guinea,

OR

Gold Coast of Africa.

To the Editor of the *John o'Groat's Journal*.

“SIR,—As everything connected with the Ashantees and the Gold Coast of Africa may be considered interesting at the present moment, I make no apology for introducing this letter to your notice, if you can find room for it in your excellent paper.

In September 1867, at the breaking out of the Abyssinian war, the writer published a little book entitled, *The Hand-book of Abyssinia*, which was very well received, and therein the following passage occurs, (Notes to page 12th, line 35th)—“Agoona is the name of a petty little kingdom on the Gold Coast of Africa, and there are two other places not far from Agoona, called Axum or Axim and Ankober (both Abyssinian names) the latter being that of the southern capital of Abyssinia, whilst Axum or Axim was the name of the central capital of this ancient and once mighty Empire. There is another place called Sabu or Saba, adjoining the Gold Coast, formerly belonging to the kingdom of Whidah, which kingdom was conquered by the king of Dahomey and annexed in 1726.”

This Agoona may probably have been the Agow of Cosmas, and a part, if not the whole, of the Gold Coast a colony of the Axumites. Cosmas states that “every other year the king of Axum (Axim) sent several persons of distinction to traffic with the natives of Agow (Agoona) for gold.” “At this period the Abyssinians were acquainted with the art of navigation, and had recently imbibed the spirit of trade, and acquired the seaport of Adulis or Zoola (now Annesley Bay),

from whence they penetrated along the African coast as far as the equator in search of gold, emeralds, and aromatics." But as Mr. Salt found Greek inscriptions among the ruins of Axum, also at Adulis, in Annesley Bay, in 1805, this Adulis might have been originally one of the early Greek colonial cities, coeval with, or even anterior to the reign of David and Solomon, a long time before Axum or Axim became the central capital of Abyssinia; and it is quite possible that these enterprising people—the ancient Greeks—were the first to double the Cape of Good Hope, under the auspices of the reigning monarch of Abyssinia—probably the great Queen Maquida, or Azeb, herself; and, query, did *they*, finding abundance of gold there, and a savage people worshipping a huge serpent, call it Ophir, from *Οφις*—a serpent or Python? The Pythian games were established in renovated Greece about this time, the first year of the Olympiad, during the reigns of David and Solomon; and abundance of gold poured into Greece at this period, as well as Judea,¹ probably brought from Agoona, or the neighbouring kingdoms

¹ 1 Chronicles, xvi, 25. "So David gave to Ornan for the place 600 shekels of gold by weight," equal to about £1200 sterling.

1 Chronicles xxii, 14. "Now, behold, in my trouble (or perplexity) I have prepared for the House of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver" (about one billion and fifty millions sterling, as a talent of gold was worth about £7000, and a talent of silver about £350) "and of brass and iron without weight, for it is in abundance; timber also and stone have I prepared."

1st Kings, x, 10, "And she (the Queen of Saba or Sheba) gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold" (worth about £840,000).

"11 And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees and precious stones."*

"12 And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the Lord and for the king's house."

"14 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred three score and six talents of gold" (worth about four millions six hundred and sixty two thousands pounds sterling).

* There is a duplicate or repetition of this verse in 2 Chronicles, ix, 10, but there they are called "*algum*" trees.

of the Gold Coast. It is recorded in the early history of renovated Greece, that a "golden statue of Victory was placed in front of the Temple of Olympus, and a golden vase at each end of the roof. Beneath the statue hung a shield of beaten gold. Within the temple was the statue of the god, the work of one of the most famous sculptors that ever lived. It was of enormous size, made of flesh-coloured (stained) ivory and gold. Precious stones and painting and gold not only adorned the figure of the god, but the throne on which he sat." We must not forget that one of the ancient names of Africa was Olympius. Query, might not the first ship that rounded the Cape and discovered this wonderful gold coast, conquering the inhabitants who worshipped a great Python, and bringing home such a quantity of gold, have been called the "Apollo?" (see foot note at page 17) and hence, through the medium of that all-powerful agency—gold—might have arisen the sacred legend which instituted the Pythian games at Delphos, their generally *received* origin as connected with the Deucalian deluge notwithstanding. The Greeks were the most enterprising followers or imitators of the Phœnicians, and among the first people smitten with the *aura sacra fumes*; and we must bear in mind that the expedition to Colchis by the Argonauts,

"16 And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold, six hundred shekels of gold went to one target" (worth about £240,000 sterling).

"17 And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold, three pounds of gold went to one shield" (worth about £75,000 sterling).

"18 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with beaten gold."

"21 And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold, none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon."

"22 For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram. Once in three years came the navy of Tharshish bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes and peacocks." Ships of Tharshish meant large ships fit to make long voyages, not mere coasting vessels.

although it failed in bringing home the Golden Fleece, became sacred scripture in heathen mythology, and the ship Argo was afterwards constituted a constellation of the celestial globe. The three years' voyage to the *Ophir* of Solomon would also answer much better for the Gold Coast of Africa than Ceylon or Sofala,¹ and these voyages might have been begun by enterprising Greeks who were driven out of the Peloponesus during the eighty years of Grecian obscurity after the Trojan war, and previous to the reinvasion of Greece by the Heraclidæ. Besides Olympius, another of the ancient names of Africa was Lybia, so called from the grand-daughter of Jupiter, and the great Egyptian god Osiris was synonymous with Jupiter, Apollo, Hercules, and Prometheus. After the description of the celebrated siege of Troy by Homer, the great bard describes Egyptian Thebes; and Greek inscriptions are found on the ruins of temples, &c., in this once enormous city to this day. Osiris was also worshipped at Heliopolis as Apollo or the Sun. Did not the Greeks, then, some years after the Trojan war, become identified, as it were, with Egypt? and hence the invasion of the Heraclidæ from Daraa (not Doria),² after which the Olympic games were established, and she (Egypt) then became a powerful nation.

Dr. Doig, formerly master of the Grammar School at Stirling, came to the conclusion that the *Ophir* of Solomon *was* situated on the Gold Coast of Africa;³ and we may reasonably suppose that the fleets of Solomon and Hiram, after leaving the port of Eziongeber or Elion, proceeded down the Red Sea with a fair wind to Adulis (now Annesley Bay), where they provisioned and recruited, having established relations with Azeb, the Queen of Saba, Sheba, or Abyssinia, waiting there for the favourable monsoon, and then pro-

¹ Or Southern India.

² Daara was the ancient name of the Nile at Meroe—its western branch and may have been confounded with Doria or Doris.

³ Job xxii, 24.

ceeding leisurely along the African coast, after passing the Straits of Babel Mandeb (the Gate of Death); and probably halting at Zanzibar or Delagoa Bay for favourable weather to round the Cape, from thence proceeding along the west coast of Africa with the favourable southerly trade wind, and taking in their gold and ivory, apes and peacocks at the rivers Volta, Prah, Ankober, Sherbro, Issini, Mattoniba, Gambia, &c. (? the then colonial possessions of the Axumites); where they, perhaps, also collected the almug timber—a hard coral coloured wood—probably what we now term the African oak, or it might have been the gum copal tree, which abounds at Sierra Leone (see 1st Kings, x, 11.)¹ From thence they may have proceeded along the African shores to the great Phœnician port of Tharshish (now Cadiz or Seville, or perhaps Carthagera), where they probably took in their silver, and continued their voyage by the Pillars of Hercules (Straits of Gibraltar) to Tyre and Joppa: thus occupying three years; or if they returned from the Gold Coast without visiting Tharshish, still occupying three years.

Bruce considered that Sofala, on the S.E. coast of Africa, was the Ophir of Solomon, and that owing to the monsoons it would actually take three years to go to Sofala and return to Eziongeber; but I rather agree with Dr. Doig, backed, as it seems to be, by the writings of Cosmas and similarity of names on the Gold Coast to those of Abyssinia. I have in my possession an old map of the Gold Coast, printed in 1729 by M. D'Anville (a copy of this map is published herewith) in which he places a range of mountains some twelve leagues inland of Agoona and Accra,² washed by the river Volta, called Tafu—marked in the map as “abounding in gold;” near which is a province

¹ The cedars of Lebanon and pine timber were too soft for columns for which the Almug or Algom timber was used.

² Accra is a Carthaginian name, and the Carthaginians are said by Herodotus to have received gold from a black nation by caravan across the great desert of Sahara.

called Quahu—also marked, “rich in gold.”¹ These mountains are now considered *fetish* or sacred, and from religious feelings are not allowed to be worked in the present day, and the natives are very jealous of their position being known. The quantity of gold imported in the three years by Solomon was about fourteen millions sterling (2000 talents).²

The natives of this coast to the present day worship the great Python or sacred serpent of that country, rearing temples to its honour, and worshipping it as a god! A friend of the writer, a large Liverpool shipowner and African merchant, related to him the other day a circumstance that happened on board one of his ships a few years ago. The crew had been allowed to go on shore, and in the woods they killed a huge serpent, which they brought on board. The priests heard of it, complained to the king, and all trading was immediately stopped, but the ship was allowed to remain for a certain period by the payment of a fine, until trading was resumed. In the meanwhile the priests came on board the ship and carried the body of the serpent on shore, proceeding with it to their temple with great processional pomp. This affair caused a great loss to the owners, Messrs. Stuart and Douglas of Liverpool, and strict orders were given to the captains and supercargoes afterwards not to attempt the destruction of any more snakes or serpents.³

British missionaries on this coast have long endeavoured to put down this fetishism, but the native priests point to certain verses in Exodus and Numbers in the Bible distributed amongst them by the Bible Society, translated into their native language, in support of

¹ See map.

² See page 13.

³ The sacred serpent or Python of this country attains a length of from seventeen to twenty feet, is from eighteen to twenty inches in girth, and is capable of swallowing a goat entire. McCulloch in his “Geographical Dictionary,” published in 1866, says, “this reptile acquires a length of thirty feet (!)” (see P.S.).

it,¹ and also cunningly draw arguments in favour of utterly destroying their enemies from the books of Joshua, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, &c., where they think they have divine authority for exterminating their enemies, and decapitating their prisoners! They also worship, or did worship, idols in groves, like the Canaanites; and a tribe of the Abyssinians, called Agows, residing at Lasta and Damut in Abyssinia, were supposed by Bruce and Salt to have been the descendants of the Canaanites driven out from Canaan by the Jews.² They also pay divine honours to the rivers Nile and Taccazzi, as the natives of the Gold Coast do to the sea at the present time. They also circumcise both sexes during infancy, like the Abyssinians, saying this custom was handed down to them by their ancestors; and they conduct their funerals in the same way as the Abyssinians, holding drunken wakes, and howling over the deceased like the Irish!³

The two kingdoms of Akim and Akinni are marked in M. D'Anville's map as being "very powerful, and

¹ Exodus, c. iv., v. 3. "And he (Moses) cast it (his rod) on the ground and it became a serpent."—Exodus, iv, 3.

"And Aaron cast down *his* rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and *it* became a serpent."—Exodus, vii, 10.

"And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived."—Numbers, xxi, 9.

"The brazen serpent that Moses had made was broken up by Hezekiah some 300 years after Solomon's time, because the people of Israel worshipped it. Mr. Forster considers that this serpent was cast by Moses at Talmona, the present Maan, near Mount Hor, after the death of Miriam."—"Stones Crying Out."

² So Joshua took the whole land according to all that the Lord had said unto Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel."—Joshua, xi, 23.

³ Speaking of the religion of the Gold Coast inhabitants, an allegory exists of the book and calabash as follows, viz.—The great spirit, after creating three white and three black men and women, placed before them a large calabash and a sealed paper, giving to the black race the choice of the two: they took the calabash which contained gold, iron, and the choicest productions of the earth, but left them in ignorance of their use and application. The sealed paper or book, on the contrary, instructed the white men in everything, made

rich in gold ;" but they do not work their gold mines in the present day, owing to religious scruples, and are very jealous of their position being known, as before remarked ; but merely accumulate such God-sent gold as becomes disintegrated, and is washed down by the rivers in the rainy season ; and there is no doubt, from the tenor of this map and the geographical writings of Ogilby, Miller, Salmon, and others, that if the gold mines were thrown open and worked like those of California, Australia, and New Zealand, any amount of the precious metal might be produced under the tuition of English, American, or Australian miners ; and King Koffee could easily procure sufficient gold, not only to pay all the expenses of this untoward war, but an annual tribute of a million or more, if compelled so to do.¹ Adjoining the town of Little Kommenda, or Aprobi, near the sea, lies a hill which is marked in the map—"contains much gold." This mine caused the Castle of Las Minas (Elmina) to be erected by the Portuguese towards the close of the fourteenth century, but in 1622, as the natives were working it, the ground fell in for want of props, and the miners were all smothered, so that Gueffa, King of Kommanni,

then the favorites of the great spirit, and gave them that superiority which the negroes always readily acknowledge. From this legend, notwithstanding the worship of the great Python, and the sea, the sun, and the moon, by some sects, it is evident that they had some notion of a Supreme Being ! They have a firm belief in a future state, although this belief is unfortunately associated with the massacre of great numbers (some hundreds) of innocent victims at the death of their kings or chiefs, with a view of their being attended by them in a future world, and the victims themselves, called *oeras* or souls, it is said, are not averse to this dreadful sacrifice, believing thus, under royal auspices, to secure a passport to Paradise. Let us hope that like sutteeism in India, by the labours of the missionary and civilization, these fanatical murderous rites will soon be abolished !

¹ Since the return of the Ashantee expedition several companies have been formed for working the gold mines and are now (March, 1880) sending out machinery for this purpose ; it is said that some of the gold ore sent home has assayed £5000 to the ton, and from £10 to £25 a ton in bulk !

issued an edict that no one was to dig any more in this hill, and up to the end of the eighteenth century it had never been attempted, or even perhaps to the present day, as they affirm that apparitions of golden dogs are seen in the mines (query—identical with the Egyptian god Anubis?) and other imps are conjured up by fear, to prevent the legitimate working of the mines, which are now considered *fetish* or sacred; but if priestcraft can be put down in this respect, no doubt abundance of the precious metal would be forthcoming from this wonderful country! ¹

The quantity of gold named by David in his address to Solomon (see 1st Chron. xxii, 14) was enormous, 100,000 talents of gold—reckoning a talent as only worth £7000 in round numbers, it would equal seven hundred millions sterling! besides 1,000,000 talents of silver! all of which he had “prepared for building the house of the Lord.” Is not the Hebrew word *kikkar*, however, wrongly translated? Should it not be *bars* and not talents? For even this would have been an enormous amount, reckoning each bar at only seventy pounds sterling for the gold and twenty pounds for the silver, which would give seven millions in gold and twenty millions in silver!

I have not been able to ascertain whether the Ashantees *proper* are in general of the regular negro type, with flat noses, thick lips, and woolly hair, or whether they are of the Abyssinian or Sikh tribe of negroes; Miller in his Geography of the Gold Coast says the women have high noses and long curly hair. If so it would seem to confirm the writings of Cosmas, and that the Axumites, under Grecian leaders, had planted a colony on this coast some 2900 years ago! Bosman before named, who was for many years a

¹ There is a tradition extant in the archives at Cairo of mysterious travellers having been seen floating down the Nile in vessels of antique build, accompanied by women of blackest colour but with Grecian or Ethiopian features, adorned with rings, collars and bracelets of pure gold!

resident at St. George de las Minas—a fortress taken by the Dutch from the Portuguese in 1638, and lately ceded to the English now called “Elmina”—see plan (the seeming cause of the present war), says, as quoted in “Miller’s Geography,” “That the kingdom of Agoona is governed by a woman, and has ever been so governed, the eldest daughter being made Queen at the death of the sovereign. She contracts a sort of Morganatic marriage with the handsomest slave of her choice, and her sons are sold as slaves, the daughters having the privileges of Princesses.” Wimba, the principal town on the sea coast, lies about 15 leagues to the eastward of Elmina. May not this anti-Salique law have been inherited from Maquida or Azeb, Queen of Sheba? showing by inference that this part of Africa was really an Axumite colony during the reign of that powerful Queen, whose dominions extended from Meroe, on the borders of Egypt, to the great lakes. She is said in the Bible to have come “from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon,” and might have told him of her colonial golden possessions beyond the southern Cape. I have myself seen negro slaves at Rio de Janeiro and Maranham, said to have been brought from the Gold Coast, with decided Ethiopian features, like the Sikhs in India, having long black hair and aquiline noses. It is also said that numbers of the natives of the Congo are of decidedly Ethiopian features, quite different to the ordinary negro of Nigritia.

King John of Portugal despatched Cavillam and Payo to look for Prester John, after he had first heard of him through the Portuguese commander Camm or Caón, who discovered the river Congo in 1484, and was there told of a powerful Christian King reigning in Abyssinia, from the southern parts of whose dominions this river came. This Cavillam arrived in Abyssinia *via* the Red Sea in 1490, and having been informed that a passage existed round the southern promontory

of Africa, he procured a chart and sent it to King John; and a few years afterwards, in the reign of Emanuel, Vasco de Gama was despatched to make the voyage to India by the Cape of Good Hope, in which he succeeded in 1497, passing it on the 20th November, and making the land again, far to the N.E., on Christmas-day of that year, calling it Natal, or the Nativity, from this circumstance, which name it still retains.

Now it seems probable that the southern extremity of the Abyssinian Empire, called Narea, or Enarea, may have reached the great lakes called Zafflan, Zaire, and Zembre (as shewn in an old map published in the reign of Charles II, 1680, by Jacobus Murcium, in Latin), from the former of which lakes one branch of the Nile is made to flow, and another branch from the Zaire; and the Congo is made to flow from the united Zaire and Zembre lakes, extending to latitude 12° south, no doubt the same lakes *re-discovered* by Grant, Speke, Livingstone, and Baker. The fame of Prester John may have been easily conveyed by the Congo to the mouth of that river; and it is very probable that the large quantity of gold said to have been brought into Abyssinia, *via* Enarea, by the "Kaffirs,"¹ or Agows, came from the coast of Guinea by the Congo, and stimulated the Axumites to search for this country by sea.² It is well known that in early days the caravans which came to Morocco across the desert brought gold from countries beyond the Gambia; and it is recorded in Herodotus that the Carthaginians traded for gold with a black nation in Lybia far beyond the pillars of Hercules, some 500 years B.C. According to Bosman the rainy season on the Gold Coast is pretty well over by the early part of September, and the evenings are

¹ Kaffirs in the Gheeze language signifies Heathens or Pagans, the same as Agows.

² This arduous journey across the "dark continent" from Lake Taganyika to the Atlantic seaboard by the Congo has lately been achieved by the two celebrated travellers and explorers, Cameron and Stanley.

cool—indeed, it may be called cold, although from 9 in the morning to 3 p.m. it is very hot, even during the winter season, or from October to March, but this is the healthiest part of the year. Heavy rollers set in very frequently from the sea, owing to distant gales of wind blowing in the South Atlantic, the waves rolling on and on till they find a shore to break upon; and it is difficult to land on any part of the coast at all seasons, although there are periods of tolerable smooth water between the setting in of these terrible rollers as the successive district gales near Cape Horn come and go. Matthews, who visited Sierra Leone in the early part of the present century, says “cotton of three natural colours is grown in this neighbourhood, white, pink, and nankeen, and by careful cultivation could be produced to any amount; and the best indigo in the world grows wild in every part of the country.” He also confirms the statement of circumcision being performed on the children of both sexes, the girls undergoing the sacred rite on arriving at the age of puberty at the hands of the priests, with mystic ceremonials like those of the Bona Dea, or Cybele, among the Greeks and Romans.

The Gold Coast lies very nearly east and west, and extends about two hundred and twenty miles, or from the river Issini to the river Volta, embracing the coast line of some twelve petty kingdoms (now in the possession of Great Britain); the river Volta separates the British colony from the kingdom of Dahomey. The Issini is said to rise some 400 miles in the interior, but is only navigable for boats; there was formerly a French fort at its entrance.¹ The Rio-del-Oro,

¹ It is said that this coast was discovered in 1364-66, by a French exploring party in the reign of Charles V. of France.

Captain Thos. Wyndham, an Englishman, in 1551, visited the Gold Coast and brought home 150 pounds weight of gold.

In the early part of the eighteenth century no less than three millions worth of gold were shipped on board a small schooner for Lisbon from Elmina.

or River of Gold, and the Rio Manco, have the settlement of Apollonia (a Grecian name so called from Apollo) about half-way between them.¹ Next to the Manco is the Rio del Ankober, which rises in the kingdom of Wassau, passing through that of Egwira, "both rich in gold." About seven miles to the N.W. of Cape Three Points, is the old fortress of Frederickburgh, which once belonged to the Prussians, but they sold it to the Dutch in the early part of the eighteenth century; they also at one time held a fortress on Cape Three Points, and another called Dorothea, about three leagues to the eastward of the Cape, which was taken by the Dutch in 1643. The next place of any note is Sakkundi, which at one time produced "large quantities of gold" in barter. We then come to the River Prah, the sacred stream of the Ashantees, where poor Commerell was so seriously wounded.² This river was formerly called St. John, and also St. George, in some old maps. It separates the kingdom of Ashantee from its powerful and rich neighbours, the Akanni, who, it is hoped, are allied with the Fantees on our side. A few miles beyond the Prah is the gold mine before named in the kingdom of Commenda or Kommany, close to the town of Cotoberi, where a fortress was built by the Dutch in 1688. Nine miles from this is the fortress of Elmina before named (see plan). About eight miles to the eastward of this lies Cape Corse; it is a projecting promontory resembling a

¹ Apolloniae were feasts sacred to Apollo instituted in Greece in consequence of Apollo conquering the Python. "The true Apollo, however, was that of Egypt, Orus the son of Osiris, subsequently worshipped in Greece."

Extract from the Hymn of Callimachus (the celebrated Greek poet of Cyrene in Lybia, who flourished some 300 years B.C.) to Apollo:

"The monstrous Python durst tempt thy wrath in vain—

*For dead he fell to thy great strength, and golden arms unequal,
Beneath his steps the YELLOW MINERAL rises—*

And Earth reveals her treasures!"

Ashantee or Ashanty is an Abyssinian name. There is a lake in Abyssinia called Ashangy or Ashanty.

corpse from one point of view, hence the name, now called Cape Coast (see plan). It is on this fortress, by the latest account, that the Ashantees are marching.

There seems to be a feeling on the part of some of our very clever politicians, who know little of geography and less of the resources of *any* country, that we ought to abandon this colony of the Gold Coast, and supply the natives *ad libitum* with Bibles, Brummagem muskets, Sheffield blades, spirits, and gunpowder, to their hearts' content; so that with the Bible in one hand, and a two-edged coulter in the other, they may freely go forth, slay their harmless neighbours, and cut off their heads, *secundum artem*, as long as they will barter gold for these much-coveted luxuries of the "untutored savage." No doubt there has been a great deal of bad management in the government of this country for some years past, and the result is now seen by our having drifted into an untoward war with the Ashantees that will cost a thousand times more than the black mail we ought to have known was to have been paid to King Koffee for the privilege of living quietly at St. George de las Minas. However, this question having now assumed a phase where British honour is involved, we are bound to subdue these savages at all cost;¹ and as "out of evil comes good," let us hope that having succeeded in this respect we shall see the necessity of promoting *civilization* here by the endowment of public schools like those at Lagos and other parts of civilized Africa. Next annul their stupid superstitions as to *sacred* gold mines, and evil

¹ In the year 1824, Sir Charles McCarty, the Governor of Cape Coast, at the head of 1000 men was totally defeated with great loss, he himself was killed and it is said that the king of Ashantee cut out his heart and eat it! Two years after this the Ashantees were defeated themselves with great slaughter, and consented to pay the British six thousand ounces of gold (about £20,000) as the price of peace. The temerity of King Koffee in declaring war against the English again in 1873, was terribly punished by Sir Garnet Wolseley in marching on his capital, Coomassie, and burning it to the ground.

genii in mines (once prevalent in Cornwall), and by all means appoint missionaries—good Negro missionaries, if possible—who will teach the pure religion of Jesus Christ, and pay them well to prevent their trading. Do not allow the Bible to become a *fetish*, as at present, but leave it at home, at least that portion of it which, in respect to the bloody wars of the Jews, has nothing whatever to do with Christianity, and does much harm. Inculcate industry in tilling the ground and producing food and raw textile material. Encourage or enforce the wearing of suitable apparel, like our free and independent negroes in the West Indies. Prevent the indiscriminate importation of muskets, swords, coulters, daggers, spirits, and gunpowder, and substitute the miner's pick, the shovel, and the hoe. Compel the chiefs, or *kings*, as they call themselves, to "seek peace and ensue it." Encourage legitimate gold-mining, the staple produce of the soil, and introduce miners to teach them the art; and by placing an export duty on the gold, a large revenue will be raised for supporting the Government without taxing the British dominions—in short, make the Gold Coast an integral part of these dominions.¹ Thus the inscrutable ways of Providence may, by the present unlooked-for war, eventually bring about happiness to some five millions of human beings, who are at present suffering more misery than when the foreign slave trade, with all its horrors, was in full force; and also prove the means of establishing a universal specie currency, and prevention of these lamentable panics in the money-market, which bring such misery into the families of a civilized community.

I am, Sir,

Your constant reader,

GEORGE PEACOCK, F.R.G.S.

Formerly a Master (Navigating Officer) in the Royal Navy.

Regent House, Starcross, Devon,

Nov. 5, 1873.

¹ This has now been accomplished, the whole of the Gold Coast being indisputably a colony of Great Britain.

Since the above was written, Captain Peacock has sent us the following note:—

“I find the usual value of ancient *bars* of gold was about £70 each, and 100 of such bars went to a talent; whilst a bar of silver, much larger in bulk, was worth about £20 only, so that 100,000 of these ‘kikkars’ (bars or ingots) would represent in gold about £7,000,000; and the 1,000,000 kikkars of silver to £20,000,000, or about twenty-seven million pounds sterling, in round numbers, instead of the enormous and almost incredible sum named in *talents* by what I think is a wrong translation of the word ‘kikkar.’”

EDITOR.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

Extracts from the “Handbook of Abyssinia.”

“The country opposite Arabia in the Red Sea, at the time of David, King of Israel, having Axum for its capital, was probably known as Sheba or Saba (see Psalm lxxii, 10 and 15). It has been supposed, however, that Sheba or Saba was on the other side of the Red Sea, and that Queen Balkis, as claimed by Arabian historians, was the Queen of Sheba or Mareb, a city built by Ab’dsh’ems, one of the Himyarctic kings; and modern commentators have rather sided with the Arabians in this, arguing that it would have been so much easier for this great Queen, with her numerous suite, to have marched by land from Mareb to Jerusalem than to have gone by sea to Akaba from Adulis. However, it seems very probable that that part of Arabia at this period belonged even to the empire of Axum, the chronicles of which mighty kingdom may be just as authentic, or more so, than that of Mareb.” The probabilities also are that no road existed on the Arabian side, and, looking at the probable previous and frequent intercourse between the courts of Judea and Axum viâ Adulis, and at the visit of Azeb, the

Queen of Sheba, to Solomon, after hearing of his great fame, it seems not improbable that King Hiram, accompanied by Solomon as far as Eziongeber, where the combined fleets lay, might have gone himself at the request of Solomon to invite the Queen of Sheba to visit him at Jerusalem, taking his daughter, "the daughter of Tyre," and other ladies of his court with him from Eziongeber to Adulis, and that the ship or yacht appointed for this purpose, after parting from the combined fleet at Adulis on their way to Ophir,¹ might, in order to shorten the distance, have sailed up the Gulf of Akaba, and landed the Queen and her court, with King Hiram and suite, possibly within 100 miles of Jerusalem, as the wady of Araba or Akaba might have at that time been a continuation of the Gulf of Akaba, possibly even as far up as Kadesh, which was only some twenty-five leagues distant from Jerusalem itself. "Wady" in Arabic signifies the dry bed of a river or inlet of the sea filled up by drifting sand, also a valley; and the track of the Israelites is supposed, after they had crossed the Red Sea, to have been through the different wadies past Serbal and Hazaboth, &c., in the wilderness, until they reached Kadesh, the furthest limit of the wadies, when, encountering a mountainous land of desert rocks, and no supply of provisions, they became disheartened, murmured against Moses, and turned back to the valley of Serbal, the true Mount Sinai, where they had obtained such abundance of food and plenty of water, herbage, fruit and vegetables, and raised herds of cattle, flocks of sheep and goats—also corn, wine and oil, besides the manna and quails, &c. (see Leviticus from beginning to end, also Numbers vii and viii). McCulloch, in his General Dictionary,

¹ "Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber and to Eloth at the sea-side of Edom. And Hiram sent him by the hands of his servants, ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought them to king Solomon" (worth £2,150,000).—2 Chronicles, viii, 17, 18.

under the head of Arabia, says :—" Among the natural productions is the singular substance called *manna*,¹ produced from a little thorny bush which seems to be abundant in all the deserts and their neighbourhood, and exactly answers the description in Exodus xvi, and Numbers xi." Welsted ii, 95, says :—" Mount Sinai is about 7,500 feet above the level of the sea ; about 500 feet up the mountain is a spring of fresh, cold water, covered by a rock which protects it from the sun and rain ; a garden exists near this which produces fruits, plants and vegetables in the utmost profusion." Query, this is most probably Mount Horeb, where Moses smote the rock and the waters gushed out, as Dr. Bonar states, that the true Mount Sinai is now called Serbal, and describes the luxuriant valley adjoining as follows : " Leaving Serbal or the true Mount Sinai, the next turn to the left brought us to a thousand noble palms in a lovely hollow like a garden, ' a palm grove islanded amid the waste.' Here we pitched our tents, and exquisite were the changes of starlight and moonlight as we wandered amongst those ancient trees, where the host of Israel must surely have found rest at the base of Sinai." This must be the " wady Feiran " so beautifully described by Bartlett, he says : " How blissful is the sudden change to wady Feiran ! most like a poet's dream it burst upon us. The cliffs still towering indeed bare and perpendicular, but instead of a gravelly valley, there arose, as by enchantment, tufted groves of palm and fruit trees. Presently a stream of running water, rushing through the tarfa-trees, led us on to the shade and the unequalled verdure of the valley of Feiran.

" There in the heart of the wilderness of rock and sand, when weary of the stunted bush and nauseous scanty pool, I pitched my tent beneath a group of palms which bent to shelter it ; the spring came down the valley, and rippling among green sedges, formed a

From the Hebrew *man-hoy*, prepared meat.

small transparent basin at the foot of a fragment of limestone rock fallen from the mountain wall above, and was decorated like a natural altar with the freshest foliage. The camels were scattered about the bowery thickets, cropping the thick blossom with avidity, and the Arabs revelled around.

“My oasis of palms was not a solitary group, on stepping out from my tent I was in an almost tropical wilderness. In the palm groves of Egypt, the stumps are trimmed and straight, but here this most graceful of trees is all untended; its boughs spring direct from the earth and form tufts and avenues and over-arching bowers, through which sunlight falls tremblingly on the shaded turf. Among them some few branches shooting upright, lift high above the rest their lovely coronel of rustling fans and glowing branches of dates. Some droop to the ground like wavy plumes, others form mossy alleys resounding with the song of birds. The wind plays over the rustling foliage with the gentlest murmurs; fig, pomegranate and acacia mingle their foliage with the palm, and here in its season is seen the waving corn. Where else did Israel grow the corn that was ordered to be offered with their meat-offerings to the Lord?” Lev. ii, 14.¹

The children of Israel had at that time been some two years in the wilderness, and they returned again to Kadesh at the end of thirty-eight years more, where

¹ Mr. Forster in his “Travels to Mount Sinai,” says “The wady Feiran is the only spot in the peninsula of Sinai where water-springs run like rivers—where the ruins of an ancient city exists, or where corn did, or ever could grow. The stream of wady Feiran, flowing from Mount Horeb, runs now for six miles through the valley.”

A recent traveller to explore Mount Sinai, the Rev. F. W. Holland, in 1878, says, “On leaving Jebel Musa (the mount of Moses) I examined every pass leading northwards, which might have afforded a road for the children of Israel on their journey to Kadesh, and found that the Wady el Ain and Wady el Ataya, as described by Baron Koller in 1840, affords a broad and easy road, and is the *only possible route* that the Israelites with their vast numbers could have taken in their journey northwards.”

Miriam the sister of Aaron died ; after which Aaron died on Mount Hor, and subsequently Moses on Mount Nebo, in sight of the "Promised land."

The following extract is from the author of "the Book and its Story," "Stones crying out." "It is easy to perceive what made Solomon call for the assistance of Hiram to build the Temple of Jerusalem—a monarch with an income of nearly £400,000 a day (?) commanded the riches and the service of the known world. The Queen of Sheba gives us an admiring portrait of the great king she had travelled so far to see, the attendance of his ministers and their apparel. The whole equipment of his court overcame her with surprise and wonder, and left no more spirit in her. 'Forty thousand stalls for horses for his chariots and twelve thousand horsemen' made up the measure of his magnificence (1 Kings, iv, 26).¹ If he went on a royal progress it was in snow-white raiment riding in a chariot of cedar, decked with silver and gold and purple ; his body guard the tallest and handsomest of the sons of Israel also arrayed in Tyrian purple, their long black hair, according to Josephus, "sprinkled freshly every day with gold dust."

"It is said by the Abyssinians that the forty-fifth Psalm was not composed by David or ever sung by him, but was sung as 'a song of loves' before Solomon on the reception of the Queen of Sheba at Jerusalem, and that King Hiram and his daughter were present, also Solomon's Queen, the daughter of Pharaoh, and that the words "O God" in the 6th verse should have been translated "O King," as she is supposed to be addressing Solomon. They also aver that the Song of Solomon, so called in the Bible, was the Queen of Sheba's song to the ladies of Solomon's court, &c. They further state that Solomon took the Queen of Sheba to wife,

¹ The Hebrew word *arbaum* signifies *four* not *forty*, which agrees with 2 Chronicles, ix, 25 : "And Solomon had *four* thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen." (see also 1 Kings, x, 26).

“for he loved many strange women.”¹ Mr. Salt saw a very old MS. papyrus of the Song of Solomon written in the Geeze character at an Abyssinian monastery. “The Queen of Sheba was converted from heathenism to the Jewish faith at Jerusalem (they go on to relate), and had a son by Solomon, who was named Menelec : with this son she returned to her own country, and after some time sent him back to Jerusalem to be instructed by his father. Menelec, having been anointed and crowned King of Ethiopia in the temple at Jerusalem, and having also at his inauguration assumed or added the name of David to that of Menelec, returned to Azeb, the Queen, with a colony of Jews, amongst whom were many learned doctors of the law, and particularly one of each tribe from whom the present Umbaras, or supreme judges, three of whom always attend the king, are thought to be descended. Azarias, the son of Zadoc the priest, they say, was one of the number, and he brought with him a Hebrew copy of the law which was committed to his custody as high priest, and which was burnt with the church of Axum.

A most remarkable legend connected with a Talismanic ring, left as a heir-loom by a certain Devonshire knight (Sir Warwick Tonkin) who lately died at Teignmouth, has come to the knowledge of the editor, and as it bears somewhat upon the chronological history of Abyssinia, and is so curious in itself,—after making every enquiry into the circumstances, and finding from the late Sir Warwick Tonkin’s Physician and Solicitor at Teignmouth, that the facts connected with the possession of the ring itself and its reputed history were undoubtedly true,—he herewith gives the Legend as related to him a few days since.

A gentleman who has seen this famous ring describes it to be of opal in two colours, with hieroglyphic or

¹ There is a very curious story told in the Koran, viz., that Solomon, by a stratagem, discovered the Queen of Sheba’s legs to be covered with hair, and that before he married her she had the hair removed by a depilatory ! (see page 286 of Sale’s “Koran,” with foot note.)

Sinaitic characters engraved on it, the part for the finger being white, the crown or button, rose colour, but both cut from one and the same stone. The Legend states that it was once the property of the Queen of Sheba, and was given to Solomon as a sacred Talisman with other royal gifts bestowed on that favoured monarch, consequent upon this Abyssinian Queen's celebrated journey from Axum to Jerusalem, "*long time ago.*"

It appears that the Devonshire knight, to whom it belonged, upon his death bed stated that he had placed this precious ring (an old family heir-loom) in the secret drawer of an old Spanish cabinet, a great many years since, forgetting the secret of opening the drawer; and his solicitor, now residing at Teignmouth, upon naming the circumstance to a gentleman engaged by the Court of Chancery to take an inventory of the effects of the deceased knight, after thinking and working for some time, at length succeeded in discovering the spring and opening the secret depository, where he found the casket containing the ring, together with four manuscripts of its history—written, one in old Hebrew characters on papyrus, one in Latin, one in French, and one in English. The Hebrew manuscript was found to be in a very defaced condition, appearing very old and worm-eaten: the inner casket was of cork, elaborately carved and gilded. The translation of the manuscript was nearly as follows:—

"When the Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon at Jerusalem, as recorded in chapter x of the 1st book of Kings, amongst other gifts, she presented the king with this magic opal ring, said to be possessed of wonderful power as a Talisman. The ring was placed in the king's house or treasury at Jerusalem, and at the time of the Babylonian captivity, was carried to the Assyrian court at Babylon, and deposited with the sacred vessels taken from the Temple; but after the feast of Belshazzar, and the hand-writing on the wall, upon the decree of Cyrus, Ezra carried it back, together

with the holy vessels of the temple to Jerusalem (see book of Ezra vii, 11 to 23), where it remained in charge of the High Priest, and was deposited in the shrine of the New Temple with other sacred Jewish treasures until the fall of Jerusalem and sacking of the Temple under Titus; when a Roman soldier got possession of the ring, but not knowing its great value, after spending all his booty, he offered it to his comrades. However, not finding a customer, he went to a Jewish Rabbi, who, knowing that the soldier had taken it from amongst the treasures of the Holy Temple, and the famous tradition attached to its virtue, became the fortunate possessor, and it remained in his family for a long period; but when the Jews were sorely persecuted in the early part of the Christian era at Rome, this ring was sent by the Rabbi, in whose possession it then was, as a propitiatory offering to the Pope to intercede for his people, and it remained as a heir-loom at the Vatican until the reign of Clement VII, when that Pontiff sent it, from his own sacred finger, to Cardinal Wolsey to be worn as a charm in the King of England's presence, with a promise that if the Cardinal could succeed with Henry VIII in restoring England to the Catholic faith, he, the Pope, would redeem the ring, and name Wolsey as his successor at Rome. Wolsey failed in his mission, the ring had evidently lost its virtue! (its Genius propably being an Abyssinian Jew, or Spirit of the Agow caves, and dead against the Pope); and at the death of the Cardinal it remained with the monks of Leicester Abbey, until the monasteries were suppressed. By some means not stated, it passed into the hands of one of the ancestors of the said Devonshire knight, and has been handed down as a heir-loom in his family ever since that period."

The infant heiress of the late knight is a ward in Chancery, and this celebrated ring having got into Chancery, we will leave it there with its wonderful history, until it can be ascertained how it came into the possession of Sir Warwick Tonkin's ancestors!

"The Queen of Sheba was the first sovereign of the Abyssinian or Axumite Empire, according to the ancient records of the Abunas.¹ She went to Jerusalem in or about the year B.C. 992. She reigned twenty-five years after her return to Axum, and left the crown to Menelec. At her death a synod of Abyssinian Bishops took place, when it was decreed in conclave that henceforth Menelec and his heirs male for ever should reign over Abyssinia, and it is believed that the present Menelec, the King of Shoa, in South Abyssinia, is a true agnatic descendant of King Solomon by the Queen of Sheba, and that John the King of Northern Abyssinia has no legitimate title whatever to the sovereignty of any part of the kingdom."²

The following letter from *John o'Groat's Journal* also of the 20th November, 1873, will, although at this late period, be read with interest, shewing that the country is not so unhealthy as supposed.

FIGHTING ON THE WEST AFRICAN COAST. REPULSE OF THE ASHANTEES.

The important news which was expected from the Gold Coast has just been received.

"On the 14th October Sir Garnet Wolseley proceeded with great secrecy with all his available force from Cape Coast Castle to Elmina, and after some desultory but difficult fighting in the bush, burned several villages which were in the habit of harbouring and assisting the Ashantees. When the mail left it was believed that the Ashantees intended to retreat, and steps were being taken to intercept them.

A long letter, dated October 17th and 22nd, in Monday's *Evening Standard* gives details of the above-

¹ The Abuna is the great High Priest of the Abyssinians.

² Recent news from Abyssinia informs us that King John has defeated Menelec, and is about to declare war against Egypt, and that Lord Beaconsfield has recommended the Khedive to annex all the west coast of the Red Sea down to Cape Guardafui.

named movements. Describing the march from Elmina through the bush to the various villages, the correspondent says that when the forces approached Essarman and the Ashantee camp, and expected serious opposition, the Houssas were sent out to skirmish in front, which duty they apparently do very fairly, but when they come to close quarters we learn that they prove but sorry allies. They turn and run, then halt, and discharge their pieces in any direction whence sounds of firing proceed. Of these and the West Indian auxiliaries the correspondent says not one in ten took aim, and half the rifles were fired in the air, rendering the position of their friends somewhat uncomfortable.

The Ashantees were attacked on the right and left, while a steady attack in front was also kept up. On both wings of the advance a heavy fire was kept up. Although the enemy was in force it was impossible to ascertain his strength. From the bushes where they lay concealed, the Ashantees fired upon our men as they approached, and it was most fortunate that they used slugs instead of bullets, as the former will not penetrate at over fifty yards. Thus Lieutenant Graves was hit in the leg with three slugs, but none of them penetrated the thick flannel gaiters which he wore, merely brushing the flesh, although fired quite close by. The shots of the enemy were replied to by a heavy fire into the bush in which they were concealed, and the Houssas were by no means particular at whom they fired, banging away miscellaneously in the direction of any shots, whether by friend or foe. Fortunately, their aim was utterly wild, or we should have had a heavy list of casualties.

The marines and the blue jackets made their way steadily on, wasting no ammunition, and Captain Freemantle now got a gun and the rockets to play upon the village which lay in the hollow in the heart of the wood. The natives were here in force, keeping up a heavy fire from under the eaves in the roofs. Advancing to

find a better place for the gun, Captain Freemantle and Captain Bullen were fired upon by a body of men who started suddenly from the trees. Captain Bullen was struck by a slug, which fortunately hit his compass-case, which was slung by a strap round his neck, smashing the compass, but fortunately doing no further damage. Captain Freemantle was hit by a slug, which passed right through his arm. He at once tied a handkerchief round it, and continued directing the service of the gun.

In the meantime the Houssas, with Colonel M'Neill, had gained ground in the bottom of the valley, when the Colonel received a severe wound in the arm, the missile being a jagged one, cutting out a large piece of flesh, and severing two arteries. Fortunately medical aid was at hand, and the bleeding was stopped, but the Colonel had fainted from loss of blood.

A combined movement was now made upon the village, which was then deserted by its defenders, and was at once set on fire. There was only one capture made, and that of a rather amusing character. Captain Crean, in passing near, hurrying, heard a child cry. He rushed in and brought out a little fellow of nearly 18 months old, who had been forgotten in the flight. His first alarm being over, he was soon installed amongst the marines. He did not seem alarmed, but got on the ground in their midst eating biscuits and looking at them with his great solemn eyes as if meditating upon the whiteness of their faces and the irregularity of their garb. He has been brought over and is at present in Captain Crean's house.

The little army then set out for Amguna, which was reached after a march of nearly two hours through a thick bush. This village was destroyed, the natives having previously decamped. Here the main body rested, and a reinforcement of marines from the gunboat Deccan having come ashore near Akim, which, with Akikimfoo and Ampiere, was visited and fired. This enterprising march into the bush, the corres-

pondent says, will have a very great effect on the Ashantee and neighbouring tribes. In proportion as our allies will be elated, the Ashantees will be depressed.

Another lesson this affair has taught is that it is upon white troops alone that we must depend. The endurance of our men under such a trying march and a tropical heat is seen in the fact that although they had had but little rest the night previous, they marched on this occasion fourteen miles, and twenty of the marines who went on from Anquana to Amperie, twenty-two miles. Only two men fell out of the ranks, one from sunstroke, the other with fits, but not through fatigue."

Sir G. Wolseley has issued the following proclamation:—"To all the tribes and people on the Gold Coast.

"Know ye that certain chiefs have harboured Ashantees and other enemies of the tribes in alliance with her Majesty, and have supplied them with munitions of war and other stores, whereupon I duly summoned them to appear before me. They neglected to attend to my summons; they consulted with the Ashantee enemy now at Mampon. On Tuesday last I moved from here upon them and pursued them. They fancied they could meet me in the bush. In the bush they were beaten and destroyed. Essarman, Anquana, Aikimfoo, and Ampuine are now charred ruins. Therefore, being unwilling that any tribe should be exposed to a like fate from ignorance of my power to punish, I warn all men of what will befall those who are faithless to their country and to their alliance with her Majesty.—October 24, 1873."



The following Paper was read before the Royal Geographical Society 26th June 1876, by Capt. J. S. Hay, on the District of Akim or Akim, in West Africa.

"During the late war between the Asantis and Djaubins, in the latter part of 1875, I received orders from the Governor of the Gold Coast to take command of the field-force sent up to the frontier of the British Protectorate, to prevent the neutrality of our territory being violated by the Asantis, the Djaubins having been driven to take shelter in our territory at Akim. Starting from Accra, on the 17th of November, I reached Kyebi, the capital of Akim, after five days' heavy march, having walked 150 miles, chiefly through mud and water, on the 21st; and here, during a period of three months, I had occasion to make my headquarters. Having thus had ample opportunity to make myself acquainted with an interesting district, hitherto almost unknown and unexplored, I have undertaken to describe as clearly and briefly as possible what I was able to observe during my stay.

The district of Akim, in West Africa, lies between 6° and 7° north latitude. A series of mountain ranges, densely covered with primeval forests, occupy the whole extent, except a small portion of the south-east, and a still smaller portion of the western part. The towns and villages are mostly situated on or near the tops of the hills. In the larger level district of the south-east are only two small towns, viz., Osamease and Asámang; the remainder of that portion, with the exception of a few sparsely scattered hunters' huts, being totally uninhabited.

Having described one of these towns I have described all, as they scarcely vary at all in appearance. As one wends one's way through the trackless forest, no outskirts or other sign mark the approach to a scene of human life and habitation. We came upon them all at once, without the slightest notice or indication. They are hidden from sight by the primeval trees until they are actually reached. They generally consist of one long straggling street; the houses are constructed of bamboo frame-work, held together by wood-fibre, and thatched with palm- and plaintain-leaf. The side walls are plastered with mud over the frame-work, and very rarely have windows or apertures. They are entered by a side door, leading into a courtyard, where the culinary operations, such as they are, are performed; the rooms, which are very small and low, being distributed on the three sides of the courtyard. In the centre of the town there is generally a fetish-tree, supposed to be inhabited by the local deities; and two trees, one at each end, with rude benches or logs of wood at their feet, where the kings and chiefs hold their "palavers" and receptions.

The whole country is well watered, the principal rivers being (1) the Baram, (2) the Densu, (3), the Bompong, (4) the Pompong. The channels of these rivers are never dry, receiving constantly a supply of water from the mountain ranges, and being also frequently swollen by rain. Owing to the presence of numerous small waterfalls and shoals,

they would only be navigable by light canoes, though these even are not used by the natives, who have no commerce, and are too indolent to create any.

Having thus described the leading features of the geographical position of Akim, I now come to the second part of the subject, viz., the characteristics of its soil, its timber-woods, mineral and vegetable produce, and peculiarities of climate. The entire country of Akim is *auriferous* in a high degree; the natives, however, are too ignorant and too lazy to work the gold properly, and content themselves with digging circular holes, from sixteen to twenty feet deep, to obtain it, in the shape of small nuggets and dust—the latter being also found in the rivers and watercourses, where I have myself seen them washing it. The country is honeycombed in some parts with these gold-holes, which make walking a difficult and sometimes dangerous operation. The soil is a heavy, tenacious red clay; quartz strata and red sandstone cropping up in every direction. The country is rich in timber-woods, which grow to immense height and girth; some I have myself seen over two hundred feet high. The forests being left in their primeval state, all cultivation is rendered impossible. With a very small amount of activity and intelligence, however—were the forests cleared in the neighbourhood of the towns—the soil is so rich as to be capable of growing cotton, rice, ginger, and coffee (not to speak of other products), in any quantity. As it is, in spite of the sloth of the natives, the palm-tree flourishes luxuriantly, and were it cultivated in plantations, the oil would prove a rich staple of commerce with the Coast. The tobacco-plant grows also in rank luxuriance, untended and unused; the natives purchasing from the Coast for their own consumption supplies of the prepared leaf sent from America.

In the neighbourhood of Begoro, the most northerly town in the district, are innumerable gum-trees and india-rubbers; and both might prove a fertile source of wealth, had the natives enough human intelligence and industry to avail themselves of the treasures which Nature showers upon them with so lavish a hand.

The climate of Akim is throughout the year humid. During the three months of my stay there (from November to January), in what, by comparison, is called the dry season, no day passed without rain, which generally commenced in the afternoon, accompanied by heavy thunder and lightning.

I come now to the third and concluding section of my subject, viz., the personal appearance, habits, manners, and religion of the natives. The men are generally of medium height, and the women well formed, but short; of lighter colour than the coast tribes, with less of the negro type. The males are of slight build, but capable of undergoing great fatigue when they choose; but they are so incorrigibly idle, and so addicted to drunkenness whenever they obtain rum in sufficient quantities, that they for the most part leave all the work to the women, who forage for their food, collect branches for fuel, and wash the gold from the streams. Amongst the men I have frequently

noticed an extraordinary growth or enlargement of the cheek-bones under the eyes. These take the form of horns on each side of the nose, and so long do they become, that I have seen instances in which the man had to squint violently in order to see at all. The growth begins in childhood. The skin is not broken in any way, but seems to stretch over the horns like a glove. This phenomenon is, I believe, peculiar to the tribe, having noticed it in no other.

Food.—They are very partial to palm-oil (which, however, they can rarely obtain, as they are too idle to cultivate it), taking it in the form of soup, with snails' or monkeys' flesh. Their ordinary dish is called "Fou-fou," and consists of green plantains boiled and beaten to a pulp by a bough, in the hollow of a cotton tree, a little cold water being mixed with them. Of this they consume enormous quantities, after which they frequently fast for twenty-four hours. They sometimes *roast* the plantains over a wood fire.

Marriage Customs.—These are curious and interesting. They are, of course, polygamists; and a man is counted rich in proportion to the number of his wives. Instead of receiving a dowry from the family of the bride, the candidate pays a price to the father, varying from £5 to £10 in gold-dust, besides "dashes" of cloth and rum. The only exception to this rule is the reigning chief of the district, who has the power to command a daughter of any man without the customary payment. The present king of Eastern Akim has about thirty; but some of these are well-stricken in years, it being the custom when a king ascends the "stool" for him to retain the principal wives of his predecessor. The present King, who, in accordance with the line of succession, succeeded as uncle, has a number of the late King's wives in the harem. A daughter of the royal family in all the tribes can propose to any man, and he cannot refuse to accept her — generally on pain of death. When a princess chooses a peasant, which is sometimes the case, the latter is at once made a chief. He is, like the rest, allowed to take other wives; but if the princess conceives a dislike to any of them she has merely to order him to send them away, and he is compelled, on pain of death, to obey. They have also the privilege of divorcing their husbands, without appearing before any tribunal, presenting them simply with a piece of white clay as a token of dismissal.

With the exception of the few who are engaged in hunting, and who stay out for a week or more in the forests on the bare chance of shooting a leopard or deer, the large bulk of the male population follow no regular occupation, but dawdle or sleep about the towns and villages while the women are at work."

Religion.—" . . . Long before the Christian doctrine was brought to their country they entertained a clear and remarkably developed idea of the one supreme God, whom they held to be the Creator and Preserver of all things, who is omnipresent in the visible firmament, which they consider as a part of his immense and boundless being.

He is all-knowing, all-seeing, and all-hearing, but invisible to man in his personal form. Being without either birth or death, he is neither old nor young. He is the father, and earth the mother, of the universe. If he kills, nobody can save; if he saves, nobody can kill. He determines unchangeably and irrevocably the fate of every individual before his birth; hence the proverb or adage of the Chwee people: "Fate is an unchangeable determination." They call him *Anyankópong*, a name never given to any of the minor deities, nor pronounced in the plural form."

. . . The chief duty of the priests is to bring sacrifices on certain days of the week to their respective great *fetishes*, and to accompany each with the appropriate prayers appointed for the occasion, in which they have to be thoroughly conversant. Their usual sacrifices consist of bullocks, sheep, goats, and palm wine. The beasts thus offered must be without blemish or spot; and if they are females, must not be in a state of pregnancy. There are places of sacrifice in the dwellings or courtyards of the priests where they offer only drink-offerings; but other offerings, which are always connected with drink-offerings, are brought to the respective localities or habitations of the fetishes. These places are never approached, not even by the priests, without a sacrifice, which is offered on an altar of unhewn stones. On the day of offering, the priest is to abstain from woman, and from all animal food. Should he happen to touch either, whether wittingly or unwittingly, he is polluted and rendered unfit to offer a sacrifice on that day. These priests are not allowed to marry a widow, and are strictly prohibited to touch a dead body. After attending the funeral custom of a friend or relative, a priest must be sanctified in the evening with consecrated water, to be sprinkled over him three times by himself or by another priest of his order."¹

THE GOLD COAST MINES OF WASSAU.

A VISIT TO THE GOLD FIELDS OF WASSAU.

Extracts from a Paper read before the Royal Geographical Society, May, 1878, by J. A. SKERTCHLY, Esq., F.R.G.S., giving an account of a visit to Wassau in 1877.

(From the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1878.)

"At the time of our arrival there were upwards of 6,000 men and women at Tacquah all engaged in working the gold. The auriferous metal is found in a series of parallel reefs, descending at about the angle of forty-five, encased by walls of hard quartz and pseudo-quartz

¹ These ordinances seem very much to resemble the Jewish rites and ceremonies named in Leviticus, and point to an ancient connection or communication with the Abyssinian Jews.—EDITOR.

of a ruddy greasy look. These reefs have been worked from very early times, the country for miles around being honeycombed with holes and washing pits. Of geology and mineralogy the natives have not the slightest idea, since we continually come across shafts put down in the most absurd positions. Indeed it required a very sharp eye to detect the deserted shafts in many places, for they were sunk close alongside the path; or, indeed, in the old pathway itself, so that one had to travel by a series of zig-zags between the pits. These shafts are quite curiosities in themselves, being in some cases as much as eighty feet deep and about two feet in diameter, sunk as straight as if they had been bored with a huge auger, and in not one of them was there a single stick of timbering.

The mouths of the old shafts were in many cases covered loosely with fallen branches or leaves, so that the unwary traveller stepping upon them would suddenly find himself precipitated to the bottom, or, as was generally the case, into the accumulated water, which, in some cases, rose to within a few feet of the surface. The shafts are dug by means of a small hoe, shaped somewhat like an Indian bassoolah, the iron being about two inches broad and four or six inches long. The workman squats on his hams and scrapes the sandy earth into a small calabash, which, when filled, is drawn up to the surface by his companions. The shaft is just large enough to allow the miner to turn round in, and means of ascent and descent are afforded by holes cut in the sides into which the miner inserts his toes, after the fashion of the old chimney-sweepers' boys when ascending a chimney. Of course having no pumps, and bailing, except on a very small scale, being impossible, operations have to be suspended as soon as water is reached, and indeed but little can be done at all during and shortly after the rainy season. In alluvial ground the gold is found in and beneath a stratum of blue clay, resting upon a substratum of hard rock, or in a layer of gravel. In some districts the whole of the sandy gravel below the surface-soil is auriferous.

Where reefs are worked they have either been struck by sheer luck when sinking a shaft, or are outcropping reefs worked downwards from the surface to water-level. The latter is the case at Tacquah, where the strike of the reefs runs along the side of a hill dipping towards the west at an angle of about forty-five degrees. The head and foot walls are composed of syenite as hard as flint, through which the natives are unable to penetrate, so that, unless, the reef itself is wide enough to allow a man to work in it, with elbow-room on each side, they can do nothing with it. The shafts run down with the reef at an angle of forty-five degrees, and at Tacquah are about forty feet deep. The tools employed are hammers, generally of European manufacture, about 2 lbs. in weight, and chisels made by native blacksmiths from the commonest bar-iron, tempered hap-hazard by being plunged into cold water. Others use chisels fixed into wooden handles, like gouges, and with these rude implements, aided by the

light of a palm-oil lamp, with a piece of rag for wick, they work in gangs of two or three day and night. At Tacquah there are rude ladders constructed of bamboo as means of access, and the mouths of the shafts are covered with a shed. By working all day two men can cut out about a cubic foot of the reef. The quartz is placed in a calabash, which is tied upon a handkerchief and sent up to the workmen at the surface. These convey it to their homes, and set about the process of pounding it with hammers until it is reduced to powder. This, again, is placed on a slab of syenite or granite about two feet square, resting at an angle sloping from the operator on a crutch of three sticks, held together by what sailors would term a grommet of rope. A handful of the pounded stone is placed upon the slab and rubbed fine with a stone shaped liked a baker's roll, to which a slight rotatory motion is communicated as it is rubbed backwards and forwards on the slab. The ground quartz is caught in a calabash placed at the lower edge of the large slab, and, as a rule, it takes the whole night to grind down a cubic foot of stone, it being the custom for the miners performing this branch of labour to work all night, enlivening the time with songs and frequent potations of trade gin.

The accumulated dust is carefully swept together, and the floor carefully gone over, so that every particle of the auriferous quartz is gathered up, and every three months or so the floor of the grinding-shed is hoed up and washed or "panned" off.

The miners come in the dry season to Wassau from all parts of the Gold Coast, and even so far as Monrovia and Lagos, while many arrive from the interior. What becomes of the gold dust is more than I am able to say; but it is certain that the quantity which makes its way down to the European factories is no criterion of the quantity raised. A large percentage is buried in the floors of the huts of the miners, who like to accumulate the precious dust in this manner, though its acquisition is of no more real use to them than are the hoards of the miser. It is true the natives have but few wants to supply—gin, cloth, tobacco, and powder being their principal articles of purchase; but is strange that after the severe toil of the mines they should be content to bury the gold in jars in the floors of the huts during their lifetime, while at the death of the owner the precious medal is interred with him. A "resurrectionist" would be a lucrative profession in West Africa, for there are millions buried in the graves of the chiefs and principal men, who during their lives lived from hand to mouth in apparent penury.

Wassau itself is situated between 5°10' and 5°40' N. lat. and between 1°25' and 2°20' W. long. (See Map.)

The country is hilly, the ranges averaging about 400 feet, though the Okawe hills are stated to be nearly double that elevation. Most of the ranges are quartzose, more so towards the north, those to the south being basaltic. The forests abound with fine timber, some eight feet in diameter; but the want of means of transport prevents their being used except in the immediate vicinity. The average daily

temperature is 75°, that of the night 65°. The climate is exceedingly moist, rain falling on the hills even in the height of the dry season on the coast. The rainy season commences in May and lasts till the end of August, when the dry season commences. In November and December we have rain again, followed by the short dry season, which continues till May."¹

EXTRACTS FROM "WANDERINGS IN WEST AFRICA,"

By CAPT. R. F. BURTON, Her Majesty's Consul and Gold Medalist of the Royal Geographical Society.

"In several countries, as W.N.W. Dinkera, Tueful, Wásá (Wassau), and especially Akim, the hill region lying due north of Accra, the people are still active in digging gold. The pits, varying from two to three feet in diameter, and from twelve to fifty deep (thirty feet is an extreme depth), are often so near the roads that loss of life has been the result. "Shoring up" being little known, the miners are not unfrequently buried alive. The stuff is drawn up by ropes in clay pots, or calabashes, and thus a workman at the bottom widens the pit to a pyriform shape; tunnelling, however, is unknown. The excavated earth is carried down to be washed. Besides sinking these holes, they pan in the beds of rivers, and in places collect quartz, which is roughly pounded.

They (the natives) refuse to dig deeper than the chin, for fear of the earth "caving in;" and quartz-crushing and the use of quicksilver being unknown, they will not wash unless the gold appears to the naked eye. . .

As we advance northwards from the Gold Coast the yield becomes richer. . . .

It is becoming evident that Africa will some day equal half-a-dozen Californias. . . .

Will our grandsons believe that in these days . . . that this Ophir—that this California, where every river is a Timolus and a Pactolus, every hillock is a gold field—does not contain a cradle, a puddling-machine, a quartz crusher, or a pound of mercury? That half the washings are wasted because quicksilver is unknown, and that pure gold, selling in England for £3 17s. to £4, is here purchasable for

¹ The river Ankobra, or *Ankober*, which falls into the sea near Axim, or *Axum*, is navigable for steam launches or surf boats as high up as Tomentau, a village some 20 miles only from the town of Tarquah, or Tacquah, near the principal gold mines lately conceded to the Gold Coast Company, said to be the richest mines in the province of Wassau, and it is proposed to construct a tramway from these mines to Tomentau. The Concession "Swanzy & Co.," lies about eight miles beyond the Gold Coast Company's Concessions near the village of Abosso.

£3 12s. ? That whilst convict labour is attainable, not a company has been formed, not a surveyor has been sent for? I exclaim with Dominic Sampson—"Pro-di-gious !"

Western Africa was the first field that supplied the precious metal to Europe. The French claim to have imported it from El Miná as early as A.D. 1382. In 1442 Goncalves Baldeza returned from his second voyage to the regions about Bojador, bringing with him the first gold.¹ Presently a company was formed for the purpose of carrying on the gold trade between Portugal and Africa. Its leading men were the navigators Lanzarote and Gilianez, and the great Prince Henry did not disclaim to become a member. In 1471 Joao de Santarem and Pedro Escobar reached a place on the Gold Coast, to which, from the abundance of gold found there, they gave the name of Oro de la Miná, the present El Miná. After this a flood of gold poured into the lap of Europe, and at last, cupidity having mastered terror of the Papal Bull, which assigned to Portugal the exclusive right to the Eastern Hemisphere, English, French, and Dutch adventurers hastened to share the spoils."

From the "Liverpool Daily Post."

DISCOVERIES OF GOLD ON THE WEST COAST OF AFRICA.

"Reports have reached us from time to time during the last few months regarding these discoveries, and we are now able to state on good information that the enormous richness of these old gold fields has not in these reports been over-stated.

Renewed attention has been given to the subject, and we are glad to know that to one of our African merchants, who has had a mining engineer at work for upwards of twelve months, a prize has fallen of probable untold value.

We shall watch the further development of the gold resources of the Gold Coast Colony with great interest, not only for the opportunities afforded to our colonies on the West Coast of Africa; but for the large and most important question of the future supply of gold. It will be remembered what a vast impetus was given, a generation ago, to our expanding trade by the discovery of gold in San Francisco and Australia; and it may be safely asserted that to those discoveries the present generation owes very largely its comforts and its advancement in everything for which the reign of Her Majesty will be famous. Bearing these facts in mind, and looking at the present depressed

¹ From the Rio D'Ouro.—The author of this brochure, Captain Peacock, had charge of an exploring expedition to this "Rio Douro" in 1860, having a French Steam Frigate under his orders. They penetrated a considerable distance into the Desert of Sahara, where no ship had been since the time of Prince Henry of Portugal, some 400 years before. Captain Peacock read a paper or narrative of this interesting voyage before the "Devonshire Chamber of Agriculture," in Exeter, on the 15th March, 1878, the Right Honorable the Earl Fortescue in the Chair.

condition of our commerce, and remembering also the yearly decreasing supply of gold, we cannot but look upon these discoveries on the Guinea Coast (whence the name of our well-known coin) as most providential. We trust, therefore, that the results of the future will not only fulfil the promise of the present to those directly interested, but that it may, in some measure, be a new departure into an era of returning prosperity to the country at large.

"August 30.—The morning papers to-day have news from AXIM that the French Gold Mining Company are working actively a large and valuable vein of gold in Wassau, and that a *rush* is expected. A rush of the natives there would not do them any good, as the vein or rather lode mentioned, which was well known of before, is at a depth of 70 to 80 feet, requiring machinery and scientific working. The same vein traverses the mineral property leased to a large commercial house on the West Coast, who are now preparing their machinery; then ABBONTUYAKOON, leased to Dr. Horton; then that of the French Company above mentioned, and next EFFUENTA, leased to a Liverpool and London Company, and about to be immediately worked; as, we believe, is also that of ABBONTUYAKOON, a part of the 'Gold Coast Mining Company's' concessions."

THE WASSAU GOLD MINES.

From the "African Times," Vol. 20, No. 217, September 1st, 1879.

"THE WASSAU GOLD MINES.—Preparations for working the Wassau gold fields upon scientific principles, with adequate machinery, are, we understand, steadily progressing. We abstain at present from publishing all the details we have received, and which point to a speedy utilization of the rich stores of gold beyond the reach of the native miners, unprovided with machinery, and consequently compelled to limit their labours to very small depths. We look to the gold workings, now universal, as fraught with most beneficial results for the Gold Coast countries, because the profitable operations which are certain in Wassau will stimulate to action in the other provinces, where there is every reason to believe that there exist certain gold lodes that may not be so surprisingly rich as those of which samples have been assayed from Wassau."

"October 1st, 1879.—It is far from being an unimportant event as regards West Africa that another Company—this time a British one—should have been organised, and be now about to commence energetic mining operations upon the gold quartz of Wassau. The profitable working of the rich gold fields within the territories of the

Gold Coast Colony will be productive of such great advantages to the chiefs, the people, and the public revenue, which we desire to see doubled or trebled in order that the much-wanted public works may be executed, that we congratulate all classes—merchants, traders, chiefs, and labourers—on the advent of this important company in their midst. It is only by companies and similar organisations, operating under skilled management, and with a moderate yet sufficient capital, that the hidden wealth—the rich stores of gold—so great that one fears to describe it as it really is for fear of being charged with wild exaggeration, can be brought to light and utilised for the benefit of those interested, and of the world at large, which is now craving (as Lord Beaconsfield lately showed in the House of Lords) a yield of gold, from some source or other, that shall bring up the present supply of about eighteen millions sterling per annum to the thirty-five millions at which the supply stood a few years since. So far as we know at present it is only our long despised West Africa that can make up this large deficiency of sixteen or seventeen millions a year. And we fully believe she can do it. But there will be no *rush* of mere labouring miners from Australia, California, or any other part of the world, because capital to a limited amount and preliminary arrangement must have their place in the operation of gold extraction in Wassau. It will be seen at once that the temptation to a *rush*, such as that to California and Australia, has been diminished by this seven hundred millions of gold extracted by the natives from alluvial deposits, common soil washings, and pits, which until within the last few years never exceeded twenty or thirty feet in depth, because of the irruption of water and soil during the periodical tropical rains, which they found it difficult to remove with their calabashes, their only vehicle for this purpose; and again, because, as they have never understood anything about *timbering*, or had means of preparing wood for this purpose, the sides of the holes fell in during the rainy season. Of late, however, tempted by increasing richness as they descended, they have, in some few instances, ventured as low as sixty feet—and at one pit, now in the possession of Messrs. Swanzy, the Gold Coast merchants, as low as seventy feet. But these are exceptions. The general depth does not exceed twenty to thirty for the reasons we have above given.”

THE GOLD MINING DISTRICTS OF SOUTH AFRICA.

(From the “*African Times*,” February, 1880. Vol. 21. No. 222)

“The future that we desire for the Gold Coast Colony and its peoples, moral, social, and economic, depends in so great a degree upon the development of its rich mineral resources, that, independently alto-

gether of our being personally interested in the work of development, the operations already commenced, with those that are organized or in process of organisation, appeal very strongly to our sympathies and greatly occupy our mind. Wassau is such an advanced interior post in the Gold Coast territories, that the introduction and permanence of civilising influences there will make it a new point of departure towards the remoter interior of efforts for the regeneration of the countries lying between it and the hitherto totally unexplored Kong Mountain range ; so full of promise to those who, like ourselves, look through material results up to those higher ones of the increased well-being of peoples ; and the diffusion among them of those great truths which lead to an emancipation from the slavery of heathenish superstitions, and the diffusion of principles that elevate human nature. It is a noteworthy fact, that the great gold discoveries and workings of the present age, do not lead, as in the olden times, and notably in Mexico, Peru, and San Domingo, to the extirpation of peoples ; but to the founding new States and communities, and the spread of a civilization which, though alloyed at first by much that is evil, gives promise of permanent results beneficial to the great commonwealth of nations. We hope to see the same process at work in Wassau and the countries beyond, with an admixture, however, of the least possible amount of the evil from which it would be Utopian to expect that it should be altogether freed. So far as we personally may have power, we shall do everything possible to minimise the evil and to increase the good. This will be, of course, no new thing with us, as such has been the governing principle of the *African Times*, under our sole management, during the past twenty years. There are now, or will soon be, four organisations at work in Wassau under European management,—that of the French Company, under the title of the African Gold Coast Company ; that of the Effuenta Gold Mines Company ; and that of the Messrs. F. and A. Swanzy ; that of the “Gold Coast Mining Company,” now forming to work the “Abbontuyakoon” Mines. These must, of course, be regarded as only the precursors of far more extended operations in the same direction. But even the influence of a European staff at four different mines, all working in friendly accord, ought of itself, and must, we think, be powerful for good. We hope the only rivalry between them will be, which can produce the greatest financial results, with the greatest amount of good to their labourers, the country, and the people in general. It will give us an immense amount of satisfaction to record the progress of such good ; and we earnestly hope that those at the head of the several mining operations will keep us well informed of all indications of its being effected.”

"From the *Mining Journal* of Saturday, 13th March, 1880.

THE MINES OF THE BRITISH GOLD COAST COLONY.—The Earl of Beaconsfield gave it as his opinion in the course of a debate in the House of Lords that no small portion of the distress with which the country was last year afflicted proceeded from the diminished supply of gold from California and Australia, where the mines now yield less than twenty millions sterling per annum instead of thirty-five millions heretofore. If what is stated be correct, and it seems to rest on very high authority, the gold fields of West Africa are quite capable of supplying the deficiency. Wassau, where several English organisations have recently commenced work, the most recent of which is the Gold Coast Mining Company (Limited), of Gresham street, and which has just issued its prospectus, are preparing for operations on what is declared to be the "gold fields of the world." The reports states that some 200 years ago the natives sold annually, according to Capt. Burton's extracts from Portuguese writers, over half-a-million ounces of gold to the Dutch, Danish, and English traders, and this supply has only dwindled to some half-a-million pounds sterling a year, because they have no means of working at any depth beyond at the utmost seventy feet. English enterprise must develop the resources by regular scientific working, and there can be no doubt about its doing this, when the success of the earlier organised efforts shall have made the fact an incontrovertable one. It is a remarkable circumstance that the great gold fields of the world should be in possession of the Anglo-Saxon race, almost to the exclusion of all others. So long as California belonged to Mexico it was sterile for the great human family as regards gold production, but absorbed by the United States it poured its treasures out for the world's use. Australia followed suit. Now we see attention called and the enterprise directed to the gold fields of Southern India and of West Africa, in both cases with the expectation of a rich reward, and both in British possessions. Who can avoid believing in the ultimate universal supremacy of this mighty race which thus monopolises the great gold veins of the earth."

The following is an Extract from the *Mining Journal* of Saturday, March 20th, with reference to the working of Gold Deposits on the Coast of Guinea or Gold Coast of Africa.

"* * * * The Gold or Guinea Coast was for hundreds of years the only source of the gold supply for Europe, and the *surface* workings

by the natives have continued to the present day. The reefs, which the natives have only been able to attack with their rude tools, and without machine, powder, or quicksilver, are *now* to be worked with the scientific skill similar to that employed in the mines of Australia and California. * * * Four companies have been established to work the Tacquah Gold Mines of Wassau, and we, therefore, expect to hear in the future much more of this colony as a gold producer, whose *present* exports of gold to England, according to the Board of Trade returns, are £160,000 per annum."

There is little doubt but fifty times this amount or upwards will figure in the Board of Trade returns of future years, for by all accounts the precious metal is practically inexhaustible on this long neglected part of the British Dominions."

"Extracts from the Geological and Mineralogical Report upon the Auriferous Formation of the Tacquah Range (Wassau) British Gold Coast Colony.

As MR. PAULUS DAHSE, General Resident Manager of the "EFFUENTA GOLD MINES," in his Report upon the ABBONTUYAKOON GOLD MINES owned by the GOLD COAST MINING COMPANY, LIMITED, states that the strata of this part of the Tacquah range has been practically proved by the shafts which the natives have sunk upon it and worked, to be the same as in the neighbouring "Effuenta," and in the French Company's Mines, and as valuable, the following extracts from his Report on "Effuenta," which will apply in most points with equal force to each property on the range, will be of especial interest to the geologist and mineralogist.

TACQUAH, at the foot of the Tacquah range of mountains, is the largest town in Wassau, which country came under the British Crown in 1874. It is situated about 5° 20' N.L., and 1° 50' W.L. The Tacquah hills run from N.N.E. in a S.S.W. direction, and are known throughout, from the village of Arbowassu, nine miles N.N.E. of Tacquah Town, to the small village of Tamso, about three miles S.S.W. of Tacquah, or for a length of twelve miles.

The depth of the gold-bearing strata is not yet known, as, until now, even in the deepest shafts, the bottom or bedrock has not been touched; and as gold is seven times heavier than gravel, the richest beds must yet be found resting on the bedrock.

The opposite range to the W.N.W. of the Tacquah range is of pure slate, and rather steep; and as the continuation of this slate range is naturally supposed to underlie the Tacquah formation forming the bedrock, it must be expected that the richest layers of gold will be

found resting on the bedrock, a couple of hundred feet below the deepest present works. As the beds already touched have proved to be so very rich, the immense richness of the deeper beds can be surmised from similar formations in other countries; for example, in Australia, California, and in the Cariboo Mines of British Columbia.

The gravel beds also which form the Tacquah Valley are auriferous throughout. Year after year, the upper layers of these beds are washed by the natives, without showing a diminution of the metal. With proper pumping apparatus, it will be very easy to sink shafts to the bottom of the valley, where the gravel must without doubt be of immense richness.

To wash these gravel beds, the water of the quartz-creek crossing the range will be of the utmost advantage, as without great expense it may be led along the slope of the range, and used in sluices for washing purposes, and gold be taken out of the property, even before the larger works, as stampers, &c., for working the auriferous rocks are finished. The old native works extend along the whole length of the property. Looking at the map, it will be seen that they are mostly near the top of the range, and only now and then will a shaft be found sunk near the valley. *The natives have no pumps and do not use windlasses*, and therefore are not able to sink any deeper shafts on the lower benches near the valley, where they would be obliged to make preparations to keep the shafts clear of water, although they very well know that the richest part of the lode is near and even below the level of the valley. For this reason, most of their shafts are very near the top of the range, where they have only to fight against rain-water, and have no trouble from ground-water. The whole property is covered with forests, containing excellent timber of the largest size for building purposes, and also any amount of wood for burning charcoal, the free use of the whole of which (as also of that on the adjacent country) is secured by the Lease.

The richness of the more superficial part has been established by the assay made by Messrs. Johnson and Mathey, of 33·750 ounces per ton of 20 cwt. of quartz, which indicates, as before stated, exceedingly greater richness below.

(Signed) PAULUS DAHSE.

From the "MINING JOURNAL, RAILWAY AND COMMERCIAL GAZETTE"
of Saturday, April 3rd, 1880.

"IMPORTANT STRIKE IN GOLD COAST MINE.—The advices from the West Coast by the last mail state that Messrs. Swanzy and Company have made an important strike in their mine at Wassau. One piece of 35 pounds of quartz, which we believe can be seen at Messrs. Swanzy's, Cannon Street, London, having been forwarded by late steamer, is said to be nearly one quarter gold."

"We had received intelligence from Cape Coast by the s.s. *Biagra*, fifteen days ago, of a rich lode having been struck in preliminary workings on the gold mining property of Messrs. F. and A. Swanzy and Company near Tacquah, Wassau, but without particulars. We have now (31st March) news from Axim, the seaport of Wassau, per s.s. *Benguela*, which says :—

"Messrs. Swanzy and Company have made another very rich strike. Their agent, who has been opening a new shaft, took out, a fortnight since, a piece of quartz of *thirty-five pounds weight, one quarter part of which was of pure gold*. I have seen it ; it is splendid. It was sent to England by the s.s. *Biagra*. Yesterday I received news that they are still taking out ore of the same quality."

As this is from a fully dependable authority, we offer our most sincere congratulations to Messrs. F. and A. Swanzy and Co.

The neighbouring properties of the "EFFUENTA GOLD MINES COMPANY, Limited," and of the "GOLD COAST MINING COMPANY, Limited," having the same strata there is every reason to believe that similar results will be obtained by them in their workings when they get to the same depth, which is about eighty feet. There is, we are informed, already a shaft open on the Gold Coast Mining Company's property, about seventy feet deep, from which some rich ore has been taken. The piece of quartz obtained, as above stated, by Messrs. Swanzy, will, we hope, be acquired for the Government Museum of Mines in Jermyn Street, which does not at present contain any good specimen of West African gold quartz.—*African Times*."

Extracts from a Pamphlet published after the return of Sir Garnet Wolseley and our brave Army from the Ashantee War, on the Great Gold Field of West Africa.

"GOLD and WEST AFRICA have been more or less associated in the minds of mercantile men from the time when the Portuguese began in 1471 to visit what they appropriately named the Gold Coast—and one particular spot thereon, El-Mina (the Mine), because of the abundance of gold they obtained there. "After this a flood of gold poured into the lap of Europe"¹ from this small section of West Africa, which, until the discovery of gold in California and Australia, continued to be the principal source of supply to the civilized world.

From the records of the continuous stream of gold from West Africa to Europe since that first Portuguese visit to the Gold Coast in

¹ Mr. Consul Burton's "Wanderings in West Africa," Vol. II, p. 107.

1471, it has been estimated that the quantity thus supplied by this rich gold field has been from *six to seven hundred millions of pounds sterling*. El-Mina alone, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, exported annually, according to "Bosman," £3,000,000 of gold. At a later period, Mr. McQueen estimated the Gold Coast export at £3,400,000 per annum.

The whole of this gold was obtained by the most superficial and unscientific working, within a very limited area between the lower southern slopes of the Kong Mountains and the sea-coast. The old writer and most accredited authority as to the Gold Coast, "Bosman," says, A.D. 1700, with regard to this: "I would refer to any intelligent metallist, whether a vast deal of ore must not of necessity be lost here, from which a great deal of gold might be separated, from want of skill in the metallic art; and not only so, but I firmly believe that vast quantities of pure gold are left behind; for the negroes only ignorantly dig at random, without the least knowledge of the veins of the mines." Consul Burton says, on the same subject, A.D. 1863: "As quicksilver is not used, at least one-third must be wasted; or, rather, I may say, it is preserved for a better day."

The Kong Mountains, before mentioned, are a small equatorial range, running nearly east and west, their centre being opposite Cape Coast Castle, about 300 miles distant in the interior, and in latitude about 10 degrees North. The chain slopes off as it approaches the River Niger above Rabba; and westward towards the Atlantic Coast. A Bristol merchant captain, whose ship was lying during many months off Grand Bassam, reported that gold was distinctly visible in the quartz cropping out there on the sea-coast. The entire length of the range may be from 500 to 600 miles. All the gold found north of this range as far as the Senegal counties, comes from the northern versant of this range, washed down by rains and rivers, and from broken mountain spurs. All the gold found south of this range, in Ashanti, the Gold Coast territories, &c., comes down by floods and rivers from the southern versant, principally in a south-western direction, and from the quartz spurs which extend in all directions to the sea-coast.

From the sea-coast the land gradually ascends towards the Kong Mountains; and higher on the slopes of the range, nuggets of considerable size have been found, and many small ones are obtained. The *finding* would be more plentiful but for the restrictions and some superstition regarding them. Every nugget found by the natives is to be given to the king or some territorial chief. Many are, therefore, re-buried, especially as gold is supposed to grow in the ground from them. Leo Africanus, A.D. 1500, states that the King of Ghana had an entire lump of native gold—a nugget of thirty pounds' weight—which had been bored through and made a royal seat; and many nuggets are still reported and delivered up of three or four pounds' weight, especially in Gernan, north-west of Kumasi; while "the red and loamy soil, scattered with gravel and grey granite, is everywhere

impregnated with gold, which the slaves extract by digging and washing."

In the Gold Coast territories—now and since 1874, gold is still sought and worked to a limited extent in the same superficial, imperfect, wasteful manner as three or four hundred years ago. Bosman says the negroes sought for it "in or between particular hills," where they sank small pits; and about some "rivers and waterfalls; and on the sea-shore, near the mouths of rivulets, &c." Now, as then, they dig pits two or three feet in diameter, and mostly from eight to ten feet deep, though sometimes thirty feet, widening the pits at the bottom. The stuff is drawn up by ropes in clay pots or calabashes; the excavated earth is carried away to be washed. As they do not understand or practise shoring up their pits, the miners are not unfrequently buried alive whenever they attempt the deeper holes before mentioned, which they therefore very rarely do. When the pits thus fall in, it is said that the "FETISH" prohibits further search.

There was some considerable activity in the Akim Hills, north-west of Accra, after the earthquakes of 1862, when the strata were partially shaken and broken up. People flocked to the diggings, and utilized the broken strata without sinking any pits. It was no doubt to this district that Sir John Glover alluded, at the banquet given in his honour by the Mayor of Liverpool, when he came home after the Ashanti War.

The total sea-coast length of these British Gold Coast countries, from the River Assinee to the River Volta, is about 220 miles. It is chiefly in the western and north-western portion that the gold has been worked, although, as Consul Burton very truly says, "it is notorious that on the banks of the Upper Volta, about Kroboe, there are extensive deposits, regarded by the people, A.D. 1862, as '*Fetish*,'"—that is, that they are prohibited from being worked, by supernatural beings.

Many of the supposed richest deposits have been thus preserved entire for modern scientific working. They have been "*Fetish*." To dig there was a certain loss of life. Consul Burton instances one particular place which had always been "*Fetish*." It was always well known, being on the sea-coast. Bosman calls it "Monte de Diablo," or Devil's Hill. The natives call it "Manquadu."

Such is the country now awaiting scientific development of its unsurpassed gold resources.

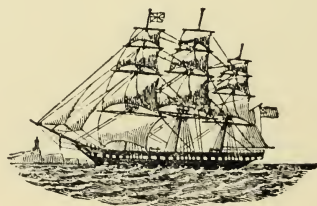
Consul Burton winds up his notice of this gold country in the following words: "It must now be abundantly evident to the reader that the great centre of West African gold, the source which supplies 'Manding to the north and Ashanti to the south, is the equatorial range called the KONG.' What the mineral wealth must be there it is impossible to estimate, when nearly THREE AND A HALF MILLIONS OF POUNDS STERLING have annually been drawn from a small parallelogram between its southern slopes and the ocean, while the other three-

quarters of the land, without alluding to the equally rich declivities of the northern versant, have remained as yet unexplored."

And yet the British Government, when it had conquered Ashanti, and had, therefore, all this country to the summit of the Kong Mountains virtually at its command, withdrew its forces within eight and forty hours from Kumasi (or Coomassie), and has allowed Ashanti to reconstitute itself as an independent barbarous Power, without having done anything towards exploring these wondrous gold formations, or exacting securities for entire future freedom of access to the "Kong" by explorers.

With similar continued neglect and lack of appreciation of the value of these golden lands, the British Government has not yet commenced the formation of roads from the sea-coast to the interior, which, by affording ready access, would have led to the obtaining of such additional evidences of mineral wealth as must have induced extensive gold workings that would, ere this, have begun to pour another "flood of gold into the lap of Europe." We could understand, though we could but deplore, this lack of appreciation while the Gold Coast territories were only "*protected territories*;" but now that they have become a British colony, that inertia ought to give way to zealous activity. Great Britain needs daily, more and more, new and extended markets for its industrious and enterprising people. The old Romans, of whom we may be looked upon as successors as regards the world's empire, understood the absolute necessity and great advantage of good roads; and if the British Government were at all animated by their spirit, several firm, solid, enduring trunk roads to the interior, as well as one uniting the whole of the Coast towns, would, ere this, have been in course of construction. That no such roads are forming does not, however, in any way preclude the opening of that great source of wealth which the Gold Coast Colony possesses in its undeveloped gold resources, which may well be regarded as almost boundless. If roads do not lead to gold mining, gold mining will lead to the construction of roads. When the English people see their way to advantage, they are accustomed to depend on their own action, and not to wait for action on the part of unappreciative Governments and Governors. The new flood of gold is only deferred, not prevented, by Administrative inertia."

"THE CONTENTS OF THIS RICH NATURAL TREASURE-HOUSE OF GOLD MUST, AND WILL, FIND THEIR WAY TO ENGLAND."



P. S.

NOTES ON THE AFRICAN PYTHON, &c.

To the Editor of the Mining Journal.

"SIR,—You were good enough to publish a paper of mine on the Gold Coast of Africa, in the Supplement to the *Mining Journal*, as to the known size of the African Python, &c. My brother, Dr. Peacock, M.D., R.N., of Gloster, measured the skin of one for me, now in the Gloster Museum, and found it to be 14 feet 7 inches long and 12 inches across, and A. Gunther, Esq., the Superintendent of the Zoological Department of the British Museum, kindly writes me that "the largest African Python skin in the British Museum is 16 feet long and 17 inches across." Bosman, who was many years resident at Elmina during the last century, states that he has seen one 22 feet long; and this I can well believe. The monstrous serpents we read of in some zoological works are doubtless as fabulous as that of the one which is said to have disputed the invasion of the Roman army under Regulus, on the banks of the River Bragada. Pliny has the credit of saying it was 120 feet long! and was said to have been conquered by using a battering ram! but it is more than probable that some *reporter* took the liberty of prefixing a unit before the 20, and it is not unlikely to have been an ordinary python brought from Ophir by Hanno or some Carthaginian captain from the Gold Coast. Goldsmith, in his "History of Animated Nature," tells some strange stories of serpents in South America, Java, &c., from 36 to 50 feet long! but I must confess that in all *my* voyages to South America, and other tropical regions, Africa included, I have never seen or *heard* of any serpent or python exceeding 20 feet; and although I *have* heard of their swallowing the bodies of negroes, goats, antelopes, and smaller animals *whole*, which we can readily believe, I never heard of one that swallowed an elephant or a buffalo! Poor Goldsmith was easily imposed upon by travellers, and Wentworth, Carli, Father Fuile, Casaubon, and others no doubt knew Oliver's weak point.

I sent a copy of the *Mining Journal* with my "Paper" to Sir Garnet Wolseley, and received the following civil acknowledgment on January 28th, viz:—

"Head Quarters, Camp Sutah,
December 30th, 1873.

"SIR,—I am directed by His Excellency, Sir Garnet Wolseley, to thank you for the very interesting article on the Gold Coast, which you have sent him.

His Excellency has read it with the greatest pleasure and interest.

(Signed) F. MAURICE, Private Secretary."

To George Peacock, Esq., F.R.G.S., Regent House, Starcross.

Before concluding this letter allow me to remark that I can hardly believe the telegram said to have come from Sir Garnet as to £200,000 to be genuine. I think it more likely to be £5,000,000, with the above sum as an *annual* tribute, for no doubt there is any amount of gold to be procured in this *extraordinary* country.

Yours, &c.,

GEORGE PEACOCK, F.R.G.S.

Regent House, Starcross, Devon,
February 10th, 1874."

Extract from the *African Times* for April, 1880.

"One of the highest gold mine authorities who has visited the East Indian gold fields, of which so much has lately been said, and who has also visited those in Wassau, has stated his belief that where those East Indian mines yield one ounce of gold, the Wassau ones will yield five ounces at least to the companies that may be working them, should the operations be skilfully and carefully conducted.

The AFRICAN GOLD COAST COMPANY (Limited), known more familiarly as the French Company, the seat of the directorate being in Paris, is reported to have a large quantity of valuable ore extracted, say 1,000 tons, valued at above £20 sterling per ton, ready for the "stamper," which it was hoped would be in place by the 1st May next, after which it was calculated that regular remittances of gold could be made.

Messrs. W. and A. SWANZY's staff of Europeans, with large quantities of machinery, tools, provisions, &c., sailed from Liverpool by the steam-ship *Volta* in March last. Meanwhile, report from the Coast says that the agent left in charge of their mineral property had been opening a new shaft or pit thereon, and had found and despatched to England some quartz of very great richness.

The EFFUENTA GOLD MINES COMPANY (Limited).—The manager and mining engineer, and others of the European staff of the Effuenta Gold Mines Company (Limited), had arrived out at Effuenta, which adjoins the S.V. extremity of the French Company's workings. They had made a road up the hill, prepared temporary dwellings for themselves and their sixty labourers, had selected, after careful survey, the spot at which to establish their works and commence operations, and were just about to begin their tunnel into the hill.

The GOLD COAST MINING COMPANY (Limited)—the last organization formed, and which will work the Abbontuyakoon property, next adjoining the N.E. extremity of the French Company's lands—will, we are informed, commence active operations without delay. There is a shaft of 70 feet deep already open on the property, from which very rich ore has been brought up, so that speedy realization is expected by this company."

